



Re-energize
the
Energy team!

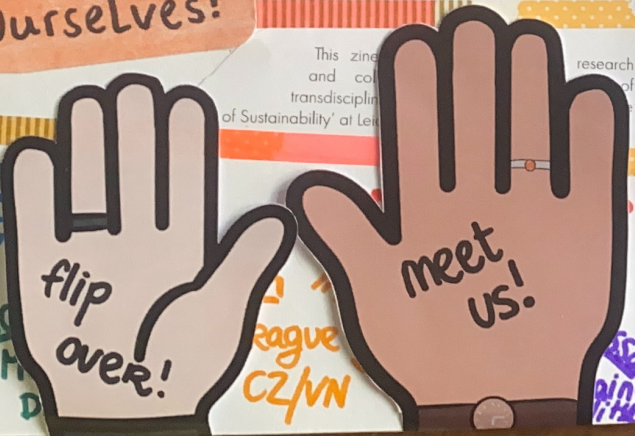
for Schroeder ♡

Introducing...

Our main stakeholder is the non-profit organisation Schroeder. Founded a century ago, foundation Schroeder is a social project with multiple goals and a long-term vision. From a network of thrift shops to community houses, and from the support of the elderly to increasing the energy efficiency of the households - all these are part of Stichting Schroeder's operations! In our quest to contribute to its mission, our team focused on the latter service of the foundation. The « Direct Savings Action » program was set in 2020 and has various interrelated aims. First, it is about the professional reintegration and coaching of individuals with distance to the job market through the Social Return Scheme 1 (also known as SROI). Secondly, by implementing the municipal Direct Savings Campaign, it benefits the local community, which often struggles to make ends meet due to high energy bills. Eventually, the program contributes to The Hague's ecology as it makes the use of resources such as electricity, heat, and water more efficient, thereby complying with the city's ecological agenda.

Schroeder!

Ourselves!



The problem

This program is facing several issues, which provide several opportunities that we can explore. Currently, due to a lot of external factors, Schroeder is in rough water. From the different streams of refugees fleeing from war and conflict to the changing labor market as well as the need for an energy transition. This results in Schroeder trying to solve one problem with another; by employing people that have a hard time getting a job to advise households, free of charge, on what to change in their house to be more energy efficient.

However, as energy needs vary greatly throughout the year and therefore also the demand for efficiency support, as well as their labor spaces are always temporary in nature, this project faces its own challenges. Our task would be to see how this sustainable project can become a more sustainable part of their business, that would generate revenue throughout the entire year as well as allow for a proper transfer of knowledge. To pin it down, the main problem can be formulated as the following:

The energy team of Schroeder lacks inquiries to expand the energy team and stabilize its other operations.

WICKED PROBLEM

The problem shows the characteristics of a wicked problem (Waddock, 2013), firstly as it is intertwined with other problems. Schroeder tackles a relatively small part of various larger societal problems. The organization deals with people who have difficulty accessing the labor market, addresses circularity through their business ventures, and aids communities in multiple ways - showing intertwining not only from a societal view but also within their own operations.

Moreover, any solution that is tried has an impact that cannot be neglected as Schroeder's target group is people. When people are part of the mission, mistakes will have an impact. This is especially painful as these are the most vulnerable people that are more susceptible to mistakes.

On the right track?

In week 2 we asked for representative Marcel's input while also discussing our own ideas and impressions from the contact with various stakeholders and facilities, opening our perception and interpretation. The representative told us individual stories of affected stakeholders which broadened the connections we could identify. From these conversations, we have been affirmed in our problem framing.

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Schroeder!

Ourselves!

This zine is a product of student research and collaboration within the course of transdisciplinary skills in the Master 'Governance of Sustainability' at Leiden University.

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the Problem continued

We identified several root causes. Firstly, there is a general lack of awareness regarding the project and about the service being free-of-charge for citizens. The responsibility to inform about energy efficiency projects to households lies within The Hague municipality, limiting Schroeder's ability to inform and leading to a lack of association of the project with Schroeder. Registering for the service as a citizen and the distribution of the orders are channeled through the municipality, making Schroeder dependent on the performance of those information sharing efforts.

The Hague urban agglomeration is home to more than 180 different nationalities, posing a language barrier to the current solely Dutch information material. Diversity of languages and unfamiliarity with the Dutch environment is an obstacle to reach awareness about the energy project. Consequently, this leads to the unfulfilled potential for households to benefit from energy renovation and advice.

Another root cause resulting in limited inquiries is the non-participation of other local potential stakeholders, such as landlords and housing agencies, possibly caused by lack of awareness. Our Schroeder representative complained that there is potential for these stakeholders to actively engage with their energy efficiency project but currently there is no channel between property owners and Schroeder.

A lack of inquiries leads to issues with a sustainable and stable revenue stream. This creates difficulties with expanding and upscaling the current team and project which is currently small, only 12 people strong. Following Schroeder's main mission of employing and reintegrating disadvantaged people into society, it is desired to enlarge the energy team. Moreover, the energy team represents an important revenue stream to sustain other operations financially such as the thrift stores, therefore a lack and even more an unstable demand is again endangering Schroeder's main mission.

In addition, limited revenue leads Schroeder's operations to be bounded by The Hague municipality. If they had more inquiries, they could also expand to other municipalities like Voorburg and Rijswijk. However, this is not the case, thus creating a reinforcing feedback loop that is hard to escape.

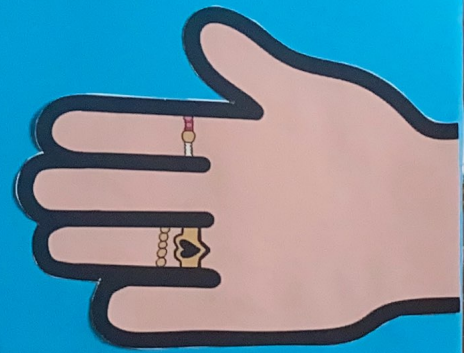
Consequently, only a small number of people is reintegrated into the workforce, moreover, solely a small margin of houses becomes more energy efficient.

PROBLEM TREE

Low number of people integrated into the workforce

flip up! ↗

flip out ↘



Language barrier

the operation with Schroeder

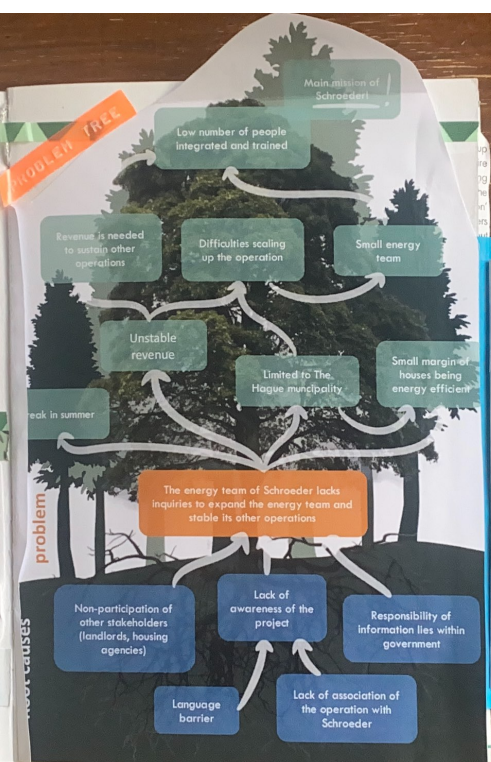
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Actor's name	Actor's description	Relation to Schroeder	Strategy of engagement
Swijk/Westland	Municipalities neighboring The Hague	Potential partner which can scale up Schroeder's area of operation	Demonstrate socio-economic benefits of energy-efficient households
Medion	Big renting agency	Potential partner which can scale up Schroeder's area of operation	Leaflets, information events, awareness campaigns
Neighboring businesses	Warehouses and offices	Potential partner which can scale up Schroeder's area of operation	Provide an overview of the types of work which Schroeder did in their own offices
Wierthuis	Community centers	Potential partner which can scale up Schroeder's area of operation	Team-up with organizations that operate similar spaces (e.g.: Tuw)
Voedselbanken	Food banks	Potential partner which can scale up Schroeder's area of operation	Increase awareness among communities that rarely reach municipality

Schroeder does not operate in a vacuum; rather it's interdependent with many different stakeholders. To create an overview of these, a stakeholder map is made. Within this section you can read how this was conducted and answers to other relevant questions.

How did we identify our local actors? How did we interact with local actors and partner organizations?

We identified local actors during consultations with our partner's operations' director, Marcel Marskamp. First, to establish what actors are involved, we needed to understand what steps are undertaken by the Energy Team. The second meeting with Marcel illustrated why input from the partner is crucial. What first seemed like a simple provision of a service is, in reality, a delicate interaction between the stakeholders. Residents of The Hague Southwest spread the word about the team, including in the community centers. In this way, trust is established and individuals who are unfamiliar with Schroeder become ready to open their doors to newcomers. Once the work is complete, the Energy Team acts as an informant to help solving even those issues which are not in their direct competence. Thus, the landlords and the municipality are not only informed about but are also held accountable for the residents' living conditions. Schroeder's interactions with the stakeholders are thereby essential to be mapped.

Who are the most relevant actors for the partner organization? What type of relationship do we want to develop with these actors?

Among all partners, the municipality is the central stakeholder and partner for Schroeder. That is because their relations can be observed before, during and after the Energy Team visits a household. First, the encounter between people with knowledge about Schroeder and those unfamiliar with it often takes place in locations operated by the municipality, so-called 'buurthuizen.' Second, the requests for improving energy efficiency are channeled exclusively through the municipality. Finally, once the service has taken place, it is up to the government's officials to pay back the materials used by the energy team and to tackle any reported issue.

Subsequently, another group of Schroeder stakeholders are organizations. In The Hague, there are three other organizations that have the same task regarding energy efficiency in households: Buurbeheer Ontwikkeling Zeeheldenkwartier (BBOZ), Greenfox and Nels Company. Although they have the same task as Schroeder, they are not competing since the municipality of The Hague equally distributed the zip-codes according to the capacity of each organization. Sometimes they meet to discuss problems all the organizations are facing in the execution of the work and try to learn from each other. Another stakeholder group is the suppliers. The suppliers provide the necessary products and materials that Schroeder's needs in order to execute the adaptations in the households to become more energy efficient like LED lamps and saving shower heads.

One of the most important stakeholders of Schroeder is its clients. Without their clients, Schroeder doesn't have any work to do. The clients – which could be households, landlords, and neighboring businesses – are connected to Schroeder through the municipality of The Hague. At this moment Schroeder is only operating in The Hague, but they aim to expand to other municipalities like Rijswijk and Westland as well.

Another important stakeholder is Schroeder's employees: working in the call center for practicalities and appointments, and executive employees, a team of currently 12 people who visit the households and make the houses more energy efficient. The team is coached by a team leader who teaches the employees about both the theoretical and the practical parts of energy efficiency. In one of the next sections follows an interview with the team leader, Achmed.

What are possible new links that would benefit Schroeder?

The table shows potential stakeholders that can contribute to scaling up Schroeder's Energy Team operations. The general strategy will require negotiations with various actors with one goal in mind – increasing awareness about their service. As has been previously mentioned, the main task is to break out of the seasonality, a situation where 'reparation' enquiries are only filed in winter months. Therefore, potential partners (be it businesses, municipalities, or households) need to be briefed about increasing energy expenses in the summer. It has already been argued that heatwaves pose a threat to vulnerable communities in The Hague and that the municipality needs to develop plans to minimize risk (Dircke 2022). Similarly, the Dutch government expects cooling (which is currently lower in the Netherlands than in other European countries) to increase significantly by 2030 due to climate change (RVO 2020). We can thus expect that expenses for energy as well as for water will drastically increase, forcing households to spend more on utilities. Schroeder is able to bring positive transformations to lower these costs, but it requires raising awareness among stakeholders.

Engagement strategies

The holistic strategy of engagement with other actors thus involves awareness raising in order to scale up Energy Team's reach. The first step in this direction is to inform similar non-profit organizations, SMEs, neighboring municipalities, and other to-be stakeholders about the Energy Team. It encompasses negotiations, networking, information campaigns and joint events. Once relations are established, the Energy Team can proceed to the operations that make partnering actors themselves more energy-efficient, such as replacing old energy bulbs at neighboring warehouses. As soon as the added value of the Energy Service becomes evident to the new stakeholders (e.g.: through smaller energy bills), they can, in their turn, become Schroeder's 'ambassadors.' Thus, they can inform their clients and customers about such a service with Schroeder's leaflets and information events. The goal is to diversify the Team's public by appealing to audiences with different backgrounds - non-Dutch speaking communities or climate-aware individuals like students for instance.

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Stakeholders



The Theory of change for our challenge

In this segment we will explain our theory of change based on the problem as described above.

Needs

One of the most notable needs for the energy team is economic stability throughout the year. I.e., the energy team receives most inquiries during autumn and winter, however, lacks requests in the summer and spring. To achieve the short and long-term goals we identify a need for expansion through further cooperation with more partners. Currently, the energy team receives requests only from individual households. An increase of inquiries could be achieved through other actors like through landlords and housing agencies. Another problem we identified that is hindering Schroeder's expansion is the general lack of knowledge about the existence of the energy team. A general marketing or/and information campaign is needed.

Moreover, due to people leaving the team quickly, Schroeder needs to create an effective and fast training program for new employees. Often employees leave Schroeder for higher-paid employment, fulfilling its mission to reintegrate people into the job market, but simultaneously it leaves Schroeder with the need to recruit and train new people rapidly. Additionally, The Hague is a very diverse city with multiple ethnicities and a variety of languages is spoken (CBS, 2021). Thus, there is another need for the team to be able to speak other languages such as Turkish, Polish, Arabic, Indonesian and more to cover a wider range of the society. If the energy team spoke and interacted with non-Dutch speakers, the team has the potential to reach more households.

Resources

To achieve these diverse activities Schroeder already possesses a good array of tools to their disposal. Schroeder currently has multiple spaces such as 6 stores with community centers. Another valuable resource is Schroeder's employees. Aside of the clear function of doing the energy transition of households, the people within the energy team are further invaluable as some of them have a deep understanding of non-Dutch cultures and speak other languages aside of Dutch. Other obvious resources constitute the relationship with the municipality of the Hague and its subsidies. Lastly, an important resource is the private partners supplying Schroeder with the material needs for their energy efficiency activities.

Activities

To achieve Schroeder's goal of better energy efficiency and expansion of the energy team, we promote several ideas. We suggest the development of an informative marketing strategy. We failed to notice any promotional material during our visits to the stores. E.g., we would like to suggest the use of flyers and posters in all of Schroeder's physical stores and not in only Dutch and English but also in other languages commonly heard in the Hague. Moreover, we suggest a green consultation hour within the stores or buurthuizen, passing by customers could receive individual advice on their energy consumption and about the activities of the Schroeder's energy team. There Schroeder could also closer research what are the specific needs of citizens.

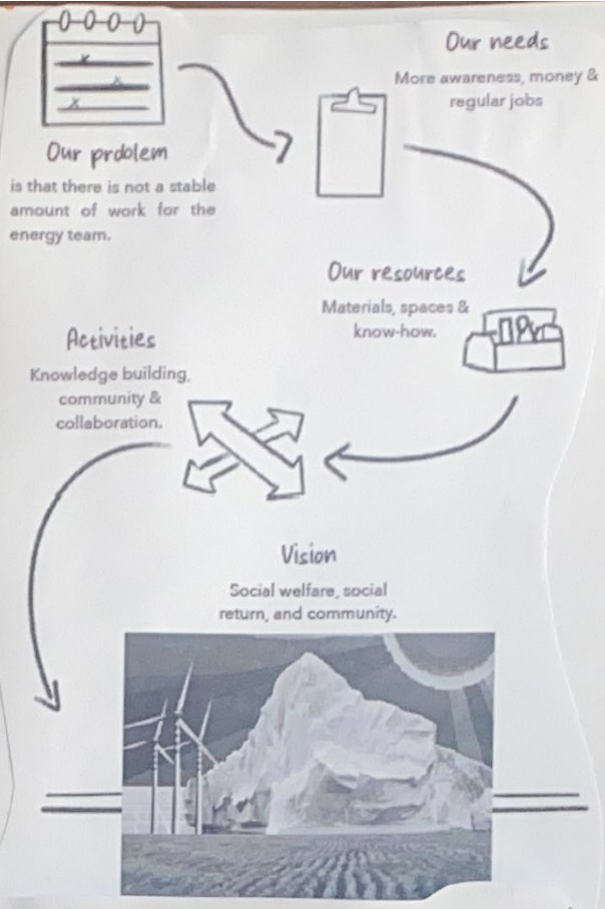
Another aspect of the marketing campaign would also be a focus on non-Dutch and ethnic minorities. We would suggest that Schroeder gets in touch with other minorities like Indian, Turkish, Arabic speaking communities, even religious communities etc. Like in the successful example of reaching out to the Chinese community earlier.

Part of this information campaign would be a closer collaboration with the municipalities. Currently, Schroeder is in collaboration with the city of The Hague. However, Marcel (operational manager) says the municipality 'could do more' to promote the city's energy efficiency program. It is hard to disagree as we failed to see any advertisements regarding this project on street billboards and after visiting The Hague municipality offices.

Moreover, as Marcel confirms there is more potential for expansion in neighboring municipalities like Rijswijk and Voorburg. Based on our interview with Marcel, we also see relevance in the expansion of the energy team to small and medium enterprises (SMEs). There is also potential for SMEs to benefit from a visit from Schroeder's energy team to optimize their energy efficiency and consumption, especially the ones in the industrial zone of The Hague. Together with Marcel we do not assume bigger enterprises would use the energy saving project as they probably have their own in-house team to cater to their sustainability goals. An expansion of the client based to SMEs would also include research into what are the needs of private companies if they had to receive a visit from the energy team to specifically cater to the private sector.

The theory of
change

flip up ↑



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To achieve these diverse activities Schroeder already possesses a good array of tools to their disposal. Schroeder currently has multiple spaces such as 6 stores with community centers. Another valuable resource is Schroeder's employees. Aside of the clear function of doing the energy transition of households, the people within the energy team are further invaluable as some of them have a deep understanding of non-Dutch cultures and speak other languages aside of Dutch. Other obvious resources constitute the relationship with the municipality of the Hague and its subsidies. Lastly, an important resource is the private partners supplying Schroeder with the material needs for their energy efficiency activities.

The importance of mouth-to-mouth 'publicity'
One example shows the importance of mouth-to-mouth 'publicity' and of communities' engagement. Schroeder sometimes struggles to reach the minorities that mainly interact within their circle. The Chinese community of The Hague is one of such groups. Therefore, any classic advertisement would likely remain unnoticed by them. However, since this group maintains strong ties between its members, personal advice can reach all of them at once. So, when a Chinese employee from the thrift store in Fahrenheitstraat talked about the Energy Team to their community and surroundings a few weeks ago, the message spread among dozens of people. Marcel was astonished by the result - forty requests (all from the Chinese community members) in one day!

Flip!
over. :)

The theory of change

Problem
The energy team of Schroeder lacks inquiries to expand the energy team and stabilizes its other operations

Needs
Higher awareness of the team
Stability
Long-term partner
Language diversity
Easy way of finding people for the energy team
Revenue

Resources
Municipality subsidies
Energy partners
Municipality cultural backgrounds
Second-hand store community articles
Knowledge of the current team
Sector - culture shops
Other municipalities

Activities
Reaching to communities (through the leaders)
Collaboration with other municipalities
Education of energy efficiency
Expansion to SMEs
Second-hand information get (social media)
Finding out what type of people have
Clear conditions

Short-term outcomes
Lower energy costs
Employment increase to the energy team
More awareness about energy efficiency
Higher awareness about energy efficiency
Paper to be put in front of the organization

Long-term outcomes
Independence and sustainability
Energy team expansion with energy team
Supportive relationship as a partner
Energy efficiency of the organization
Stability and revenue

Ultimate goal / Impact / vision
Social return
Expansion of energy team
Environmental sustainability
Community building
Just energy transition

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The theory of change

Outcomes in the short and long-run

Through these activities we theorize the energy team can contribute to these goals: lower energy costs among citizens in The Hague and consequently in the long-term lowering the energy impact from a macro perspective. Moreover, collaboration with other non-profits such as Toon for material reuse and Participatie Keuken for energy can lead to an expansion of the energy team's activities within the city. Through these activities Schroeder should also achieve other partnerships with communities and housing sector actors, to ensure reaching broad parts of society.

From these actions in the end there as a result there will be a higher awareness about energy efficiency. Within Schroeder through a successful peer-to-peer educational program sharing the knowledge within the team but also outside through the energy team services, education in schools and community places as well, establishing the team as a region-wide knowledge broker in the future.

The diversification and expansion of services will allow Schroeder to tackle problems apart from energy efficiency in the long future and provide more independence from seasonality and contribute to the long-term financial stability of the organization. The expansion of the energy team will quickly provide employment for people with distance from the labor market and continuously develop to longer employment and reintegration of this group, providing for large social returns.

Ultimate vision

We believe that all of this will lead to the realization of Schroeder's vision. Social welfare through building a community, expanding the energy team, and providing social return. Social welfare through a just energy transition and environmental sustainability.

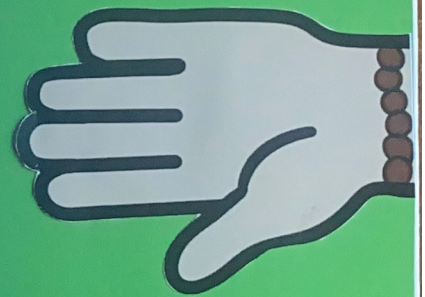
Visualizations

In order to make sure that we can both present a comprehensive and easily understood visual, we have decided to create two. Although our first representation better corresponds to the purposes of the science-policy interface, we do believe that our full brainstorm of our theory of change belongs to a proper visualization too.

THEORY OF CHANGE

> Design thinking applied!

DT's key principles	Description of the principle	Application to Schroeder's Energy Team (SET)
Problem framing	Questioning and reframing of the initial problem	The relevance of the initial problem has been confirmed by stakeholders
		Goals and opinions: Marcel (Schroeder's Operational Director): → Breaking out of seasonality Achmed (Head of SET): → Improving customers' well-



Flip out! →

Outcomes in the short and long-run

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The diversification and expansion of services will allow Schroeder to tackle problems apart from energy efficiency in the long future and provide more independence from seasonality and contribute to the long-term financial stability of the organization. The expansion of the energy team will quickly provide employment for people with distance from the labor market and continuously develop to longer employment and reintegration of this group, providing for large social returns.

Ultimate vision

We believe that all of this will lead to the realization of Schroeder's vision: Social welfare through building a community, expanding the energy team, and providing social return. Social welfare through a just energy transition and environmental sustainability.

Visualizations

In order to make sure that we can both present a comprehensive and easily understood visual, we have decided to create two. Although our first representation better corresponds to the purposes of the science-policy interface, we do believe that our full brainstorm of our theory of change belongs to a proper visualization too.

THEORY OF CHANGE

> Design thinking applied!

DT's key principles	Description of the principle	Application to Schroeder's Energy Team (SET)
Problem framing	Questioning and reframing of the initial problem.	The relevance of the initial problem has been confirmed by stakeholders. Goals and opinions: Marcel (Schroeder's Operational Director): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breaking out of seasonality Achmed (Head of SET): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing customers' well-being Jeroen (thrift shop employee): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor in-house awareness Robert (thrift shop employee): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language barrier in SET's promotions
User focus	Gathering and incorporation of the users' feedback	Processed feedback: comments from SET (stakeholder), thrift shop workers (external viewpoint), us (as scientists with access to different streams of information). Potential feedback: viewpoints from similar organizations, standpoint of the key stakeholder – municipality.
Diversity	Interdisciplinarity in the discussion of the problem (organizations, employees, customers, governments)	Translation of flyers about the 'green consultation hour' into multiple languages.
Visualization	Sketching up and trials of solutions based on the existing and innovative approaches	Scope: solutions involving higher involvement in the existing context (engagement with the previously inactive communities within The Hague). Scale: solutions implying expansion to the new geographical locations and diversification of services to reach new audiences.
Experimentation and iteration	Switching between convergent and divergent thinking, solution design incorporating various alternatives	

the interview with
Achmed
 from the energy team

Schroeder Energy Team interview
 Achmed - November 15th, 2023

As I arrived at the Zilverstraat, Achmed welcomed me with a coffee in the lunchroom of Schroeder. The room is accommodated with colorful walls and LED lighting. Achmed told me about his career at Schroeder. He started working in the thrift shop and after more than twenty years he switched to the Energy Team of Schroeder. A team was compiled by the municipality to help concerned citizens of the Hague to make their houses more energy efficient. Now, Achmed is the coordinator of the Energy Team. During my visit I asked Achmed several questions about the Energy Team and his experiences.

When did the Energy Team start operating?

"The idea of providing citizens tools to make their house more energy efficient is not new. Before people got the tool kit at home and they had to install the tools themselves. However, only a few households were able to replace for example the radiator film or change their shower heads. This system was for most citizens too complicated. Most of the toolkits ended up in cabinets, basements, or even in our thrift shops... From this moment onwards the municipality of The Hague appointed three organizations that are now helping citizens to install the tools."

What are the difficulties you are facing?

"In general people are very pleased by our work. However, some people are complaining about drafts and mold in the houses, landlords that are unreachable... We cannot fix everything, we do the best we can, but unfortunately, sometimes we have to decline. It is distressing to leave - mainly old - people alone in their cold houses full of mold. Once I arrived in a house without a decent floor. She told me not to put the film on the radiator, noting that 'the radiator would not be turned on anyway...' Statements like that hurt me. I would like to do more in order to help people."

Do you experience differences in demand during summer and winter?

"Although summers are quieter, we still have people registering for us to visit. When we don't have appointments, we are busy with other activities such as replacing all the lighting with LED lighting in our own locations. Looking back at last year, it was madness. Prices went up due to the war in Ukraine. We had so many applications that we were not able to satisfy the demand. Last year, we went to a school where I told kids about saving energy, we went to mosques and community centers to inform people. Hopefully, it will encourage people to call us."

Do you have a good connection with the municipality of The Hague?

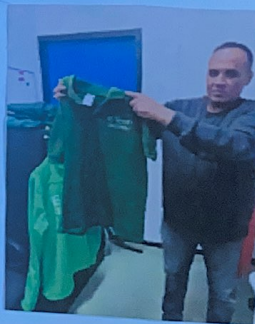
"We have multiple meetings with the municipality each year. We tell them about problems we are facing in households such as loneliness and energy poverty. Moreover, we mention that a lot of landlords are unreachable. In response to that, the municipality is working on legislation against landlords that force them to take responsibility for their houses. Legislation like that would be great, since a lot of landlords have several houses in The Hague, but live themselves in the United States."

What do you notice when visiting households?

"Every household is different. Sometimes you have to take off your shoes, some people have cats, and dogs standing grunting in front of the door." Once I entered a house with a massive temple, I was prohibited from coming close to the temple, and I fully respect that. However, I saw a glimpse of a light in the temple, so I gave her an LED light because I wanted every light in the household to be LED. Sometimes people make an appointment just after three months again. When we arrive, the showerhead is still working, the film is on the radiator and all the lighting is LED. Sometimes people just want social interaction, they are lonely. Unfortunately, we must tell them that we are only in charge of the energy adaptations. Regularly people tell us personal stories about break-ups, family issues or concerns regarding money. They trust us and are glad to see someone who listens to them. We have experienced a lot. Our work is rewarding. Most of the people are pleased and that feels good."

Imagine all households in The Hague are provided with draft strips and saving showerheads, what is next for the Energy Team?

"I see a lot of future tasks for the Energy Team. As I mentioned before, there are still people sitting in cold houses full of mold. I want to help them. So, the Energy Team can be expanded in many ways. But for now, there are still households that need our help."





ENVIRONMENTAL

Duurzamestad
Lowering residents' footprint through energy efficiency

SOCIAL

Regeling Social Return
Employment of individuals with distance to labour market

ECONOMIC

Direct Besparaactie
Saving households' disposable income by reducing energy bills

SUSTAINABLE

Bearable

Viable

Equitable



↪ principles important to our project

Conclusion
Transdisciplinary skills revolve around applying different types of knowledges together to solve wicked problems that cannot be solved in a mono-disciplinary way. While just the fact that our team together has different scientific backgrounds was a great opportunity when working together with Schroeder, it was the step from multidisciplinary to transdisciplinarity what in our opinion makes this project especially special. Through the many conversations we've had while volunteering and meeting people, most especially Marcel Marskamp, but also the many creative applications we as a team tried to incorporate to make it appealing beyond the scientific appeal, is just a start of how we trained our transdisciplinary skills for the creation of this Zine. We hope you enjoyed reading it as much as we enjoyed making it!

Handwritten signatures:
 - *Wouter* (green)
 - *Discrete* (orange)
 - *Stapels* (purple)
 - *Stapels* (black)






collaborating
together
on the
zine 

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